

Sanford Center Advisory Board Meeting – September 24, 2025:

Sanford Center Advisory Board — Meeting Minutes

Date: September 24, 2025

Time: 7:00 a.m.

Location: City Hall – Conference Room, 317 4th Street NW, Bemidji, MN

Recorder: Tracy Pogue

Attendance

Board Members Present:

- Jorge Prince
- Audrey Thayer
- Andra Vaughn
- Tracy Pogue
- Eric Tweten (*remote via WebEx-out of town*)
- Steve Johnson
- Donna Coe
- Brady Laudon
- Rich Spiczka

Absent:

- Britt Lauritsen
- Kayla Winkler

Guests:

- Bobby Anderson – General Manager, Sanford Center
- Trevor Johnson – Finance Director

1. Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion:** Approve agenda as presented — *Made by Prince.*
- **Second:** *Thayer.*
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes (August 27, 2025)

- **Correction:** Finance Director's name to be listed as **Trevor Johnson** (not Travis).
- **Motion:** Approve August 27, 2025 minutes as amended — *Made by Johnson.*
- **Second:** *Coe.*
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously.

4. July 2025 Financial Statements

Report by Trevor Johnson, Finance Director

- Net operating loss: **\$156,390** (behind budget by \$71,398).
- Rolling forecast FY2025: **\$452,895 loss**, an increase of \$13,408 from June forecast.
- Year-to-date: **\$136,943** behind budget through July.
- Major events: Babes Burnout Car Show (7,000 attendees), Bemidji JC's Water Carnival, multiple private/community events.
- Staffing note: No Director of Operations to be hired in 2025 (savings \$80,000–\$90,000 annually).
- **Accounting issue:** \$350,000 city loan not currently shown under liabilities. Johnson committed to correcting in August financials.

Discussion:

- Prince raised questions about year-end projections (~\$480K loss).
- Coe reiterated concern about loan reporting.
- Staff confirmed budget and operating plan are on schedule for Oct. 1 submission.

5. Bylaws Update

- Draft language reviewed regarding creation of **Finance, Operations, and Marketing standing committees**.
- Consensus:
 - Committees to have a **minimum of three participants, no maximum**.
 - Co-chair model to include a **board member** for ownership and accountability.
- **Motion:** Authorize staff to incorporate feedback and bring revised bylaw language to City Council — *Made by Johnson*.
- **Second:** *Thayer*.
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously.

6. Subcommittee Reports

Marketing & Communications

- Pogue reported on marketing plan in development with timelines for event promotion and newsletters.
- Laudon suggested using Chamber/Platzer data for geo-targeted ads.
- **World Juniors** promotion pending official team announcements.
- **Suite holder communications:** Pogue noted weekly updates and personal calls are ongoing; Spiczka emphasized the importance of suite move-in planning before the men's hockey opener.
- Positive feedback on September 10 press conference and direct communications.

Finance Committee

- Has not met in over a year due to staffing.
- Members noted: **George, Coe, Christie Fenner (BSU)**.
- Will reconvene in **October** following release of FY2026 budget and plan.

Operations Committee

- Pogue and Johnson expressed interest in participation.
- Discussion about restroom in link across from Tavern being mistaken as Sanford Center responsibility.
- **Action:** Post signage clarifying Tavern management is responsible — Tweten to coordinate with Anderson.
- Committee meeting to be scheduled in October.

7. General Manager Report (Anderson)

- **Ticket Sales:**
 - MercyMe – 2,090 sold of 3,493
 - Princess Bride – 327 sold of 2,154 (*discussion on viability threshold ~500*)
 - Harlem Globetrotters – 141 sold of 3,354 (*just announced*)
- **Facility Update:**
 - Women's hockey opener Sept. 26: concourse and bowl ready.
 - Suites 16–25 expected by Oct. 10; suites 1–15 fully redone.
 - Upgrades: LVP flooring and induction burners in suites, funded via CIP.
- **Communication:** September 10 press conference well received.
- **Financial Update:** Rolling forecast reaffirmed at \$452,895 loss for FY2025.

8. Meeting Schedule Adjustments

- **Motion:** Move November meeting to **Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025** — *Made by Coe.*
- **Second:** *Laudon.*
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously.
- **Motion:** Move December meeting to **Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025** — *Made by Vaughn.*
- **Second:** *Thayer.*
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously.

9. Adjourn

- **Motion:** Adjourn — *Made by Johnson.*
- **Second:** *Laudon.*
- **Outcome:** Carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 a.m.

Action Item Summary

1. Add **\$350,000 loan** as liability in August financials — Johnson.
2. Submit FY2026 budget & operating plan by Oct. 1 — Staff.
3. Finalize bylaw edits (minimum 3; board co-chair) & forward to Council — Staff.
4. Schedule October **Finance** and **Operations** meetings — Staff.
5. Continue suite holder updates, include move-in timeline; patch/paint suites — Anderson/Ethan.
6. World Juniors marketing coordination — Marketing committee.
7. Post restroom signage & coordinate responsibility with Tavern — Tweten.
8. Update invites for **Nov. 19** and **Dec. 17** meetings — Staff.